

An aerial photograph of a wide, winding river, likely the Alagnak Wild River, flowing through a vast, forested landscape. The river's path is highly irregular, creating numerous meanders and oxbow-like shapes. The surrounding land is covered in dense green and brown vegetation, with some areas appearing more open or cleared. The overall scene is a natural, undisturbed wilderness.

Understanding Resource Impacts through Collaborative Ethnographic Research: Alagnak Wild River

Knowing What Effects Nature by Working Together: Branch River

NPS Project Goals



- Tourist Impact Study
(planned for roughly 2008-2011)
- Project will address cultural issues & natural resource issues that are relevant to residents
- Focus on residents' knowledge and views of visitor impacts
- Included review of visitor impacts on land and resources of importance to resident villages, based on past reports and interviews
- Information to assist with River Management Plan

Planning the Next Steps with the Communities

- What, in your view, are the issues on the Alagnak?
- Are there impacts of Alagnak visitors that have not been documented well in the past?
- What are the impacts of visitation off-river (for example, in the villages)?

Community Goals



- Involve High School students in research effort
- Visit the river with elders and youth
- Develop a book, that is understandable to us, that preserve our history and knowledge
- Assist with map development that shows land ownership
- Interpretive training
- Community and school presentations on the archeological work conducted



General Impacts of Visitors on Alagnak, Based on Residents' Past Interviews

- Changes in bear, moose, caribou and fish populations
- Crowding
- Reduced water quality
- Erosion and sedimentation along river channel
- Trampling and littering on shoreline/allotments
- Increased economic opportunities for resident landowners, charters



Mary's Camp along the Alagnak River

Local Research Assistants

Adelheid Herrman and AlexAnna Salmon



Identified themes and gaps



- Additional information re: implications of 'displacement'
- Traditional stories highlight respect and care for land, fish and wildlife
- Stories relating to place changes how you see the land
- Fish and habitat changes
- Wildlife changes
- Water quality changes
- Traditional boundaries and respect of areas
- Map historic land use patterns and changes over time
- *Continue seeking community input*

Middle photo: Spring beaver trapping on the Alagnak, 1938-39, Vivian O'Neill, Eau Andrew, John Knutsen, and families.

Communities invested in project...

- Building Capacity in the Communities
- Building relationship between NPS and Communities
- Includes both NPS and Native perspective which gives a full picture of issues
- NPS gathering data from communities and giving back by meeting communities needs
- Preserving TEK
- Gives residents a voice in planning for the river's future

Kohkanok
Igiugig
Levelock
Naknek
South Naknek
King Salmon



Next Steps...

- Meetings with NPS management team
- Follow up visits to communities
- Visit to Branch river with elders and youth
- Reporting.....

‘Bring your
sleeping bags
next time
and we’ll go to
Branch River,
and then we’ll
talk.’

